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in Siam; these are very rarely equal to the Burmese, yet they are fine stones, and, although generally much lower in price, a single stone sold for more than \$1,000; (3) the great profusion and beauty of the opal and the large demand for these stones, which were produced in greater quantity, finer quality and at a somewhat lower cost than ever before from the fields at Fermoy, Queensland, and in the new locality at White Cliff, in New South Wales.

THE article by Dr. Dabney in the issue of this JOURNAL for January 15th, pointing out the advantages of a National Department of Science, was prepared at the suggestion of Hon. Gardiner G. Hubbard, who wrote to Dr. Dabney as follows:

1328 CONNECTICUT AVE.,

WASHINGTON, D. C., January 3, 1897.

DR. CHARLES A. DABNEY, JR., Washington, D. C.:

DEAR SIR: My attention has been called at different times during the past year to the great number of scientists employed by the government and the large amount of appropriations. I have also observed that the same subject seemed to be treated often under two and sometimes under three departments, thus leading to needless duplication of labor.

I know that your attention has been somewhat called to this subject. I, therefore, venture to ask you, if your time will permit, to prepare an article for publication, which shall bring out fully all these facts, and also suggest a remedy which would seem to be the placing all this scientific work under one department. I know of no one better fitted than yourself to perform this work and am sure that it will be carefully and correctly done.

Very truly yours,

GARDINER G. HUBBARD.

HON. CHARLES W. DABNEY, JR.,

*Assistant Secretary of Agriculture.*

#### UNIVERSITY AND EDUCATIONAL NEWS.

THE New York Court of Appeals has decided the Fayerweather will case by affirming the judgment of the lower court. The residuary estate, now amounting to more than \$3,000,000, will consequently be divided equally among the twenty colleges named in the will. The following institutions will each receive more than \$150,000: Amherst, Bowdoin, Dartmouth, Williams, Yale, Columbia, Hamilton, Lafayette, Lincoln, Maryville, Marietta, Adelbert, Wabash,

Park, Wesleyan, Rochester, Cornell, Virginia, Hampton, and the Union Theological Seminary.

A NUMBER of professors of the University of Berlin have asked permission from the Senate to inaugurate a system of university extension lectures. It appears, however, that there is considerable opposition to the plan in Germany, in part because it is supposed that many university professors might favor the views of social democracy.

ACCORDING to the new *Prussian Budget* professors in the University at Berlin will receive an increase of salary of \$500 Marks, and smaller increases in salary are granted to professors in the other Prussian universities and to teachers in the schools.

MR. HAROLD HEATH has been appointed fellow in biology and Mr. J. M. Mathews fellow in chemistry in the University of Pennsylvania.

DR. E. WIECHERT, docent at the University of Königsberg, has been promoted to a professorship. Dr. Willstätter, of Karlsruhe, has qualified as docent in chemistry in the University at Berlin.

#### DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE.

##### SIMPLIFIED SPELLING.

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: In a book notice sent to you to-day you will observe two instances of the innovation in spelling proposed by Funk & Wagnalls. Instead of 'grouped' and 'addressed,' I have written 'groupt' and 'addrrest.' Unless special instructions are given, your compositor and proof-reader will ignore my attempt at reform and print these words according to the prevalent fashion. Of this I cannot complain, for it is certainly the privilege of a journal to unify its pages in the matter of spelling. Neither am I disposed to criticize SCIENCE for not joining in the spelling-reform movement, for it would be unwise for a journal with its own battles to fight to incur the odium which attaches to rational spelling. The prejudices in favor of irrational spelling are so strong and prevalent that they cannot be opposed without a certain measure of sacrifice on the part of the opponent. Nevertheless, it seems to me that SCIENCE may, without harm to itself, allow such of its contributors as have